

HILL FIELD, DEPOT SUPPLY WAREHOUSE #1
(Hill Field, Building 5)
(Hill Field, Supply Division Headquarters)
(Hill Field, Building 102)
7274 Wardleigh Road
Layton vicinity
Davis County
Utah

HAER No. UT-85-B

HAER
UTAH
6-LAY. V,
2B-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
Rocky Mountain System Support Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HILL FIELD, DEPOT SUPPLY WAREHOUSE #1
(HILL FIELD, BUILDING 5)
(HILL FIELD, SUPPLY DIVISION HEADQUARTERS)
(HILL FIELD, BUILDING 102)

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HAER No. UT-85-B

Location: 7274 Wardleigh Road, Hill Air Force Base, Layton Vicinity, Davis County, Utah

UTM: 12-417820-4552080

Date of Construction: 1941

Architect: Construction Division, Office of the Quartermaster General

Builder: Peter Keiwit & Sons Co. (Omaha, Nebraska)

Present Owner: Hill Air Force Base

Present Use: Administrative/Warehouse

Significance: This Depot Supply Warehouse and Supply Division Headquarters housed principal storage activities at Hill Field/Air Force Base during and after World War II. This building provides particularly vivid images of the processes involved in the mission of receiving, storing and supplying air materiel for the U.S. Army Air Corps in support of the Pacific and European theaters of military operation during World War II. In addition, it contributes to a deeper understanding of the early development of the U.S. Army Air Corps, a branch of the Army that eventually became the U.S. Air Force. Hill Field was one of only two air depots established in the United States during the tumultuous years immediately preceding World War II.

History: Building 5, the Depot Supply Warehouse #1 and Supply Division Headquarters, was a primary warehouse facility at Hill Field during World War II. Building 5 contained administrative offices in a two-story section at the north of the building. The two long, narrow wings housed storage spaces which were accessed by railroad tracks that ran between them. The areas closest to the offices contained shipping and receiving areas which were adjacent to a large loading platform at the end of the tracks. Materials stored in this part of the warehouse included clothing, rubber, and photographic paper.

The first shipment of supplies was received at Ogden Air Depot in January 1941 and was followed by additional shipments in February and March. By May 1941, Ogden Air Depot was receiving an average of 20 train carloads of material per day. Building 5 had not yet been completed, and all available warehouse space was soon filled to capacity. Many overflow supplies were hauled by truck to a leased warehouse in Bountiful, and material that could be stored safely outdoors under tarpaulins covered over 500,000 square feet. A desperately needed 1,000,000 square feet of additional warehouse space was expected to be completed in October.

Building 5 was completed in July 1941, and provided approximately 300,000 square feet of indoor storage space. As fast as warehouses could be completed, they were filled with supplies.

The December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor brought a more intense flood of supplies to Ogden Air Depot as military goods were brought inland as a precaution against possible coastal bombing. Because of the shortage of indoor storage space, even more items were stacked outdoors and covered with tarpaulins.

No packing lists or shipping tickets were attached to the packing cases, so items could not be identified without unpacking them. Since the shipping crates were stored outside, they were not unpacked unless absolutely necessary. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to obtain the original packing lists from the manufacturers who shipped the materials.

Most available personnel on the Base were processing incoming aircraft, so few workers were available to catalog the incoming supply shipments. Only 16 of 1700 employees in the Depot Supply division had more than one year of experience with supply operations. To complicate matters further, most of the people who aided in the work had never seen aircraft parts like ailerons (movable flaps that were mounted to the wings of airplanes), or superchargers (compressors used to supply high pressure air to engine cylinders), which were prevalent among the incoming supplies. Thus many items could not be readily identified or cataloged, even when they were unpacked. Requests for items listed as "not in stock" were often present, but the items could not be issued because they had not been identified, inspected, or recorded.

Aircraft repair quotas set by Air Command were rarely met in the beginning months of World War II because needed materials were often difficult to procure, and the majority of special tools were unobtainable. Without other options, many of these items were designed and manufactured on the Base. As the war progressed, these obstacles began to subside. A shortage of special parts, tools, equipment, and adequate working space continued to present challenges, but in gradually reduced proportion. Many items continued to be manufactured by the depot shops as the needs for them became sufficiently urgent.

A Special Parts Control Unit (later renamed Expediting Branch) was established in February 1942 to anticipate, evaluate, and minimize shortages of goods that were needed to complete aircraft repair, winterization, and modification projects. Specialized sub-depots were placed within each division to optimize accessibility. All non-expendable material for the engineering shops was requisitioned to the General Supply Department through expeditors, who maintained follow-up on material that could not be readily furnished by the Supply Department. At first, each individual shop was represented by an expeditor who traced materials required for each job. This involved investigations into all classes of supplies, and resulted in considerable confusion and duplication. After a few months, each expeditor was assigned certain property classes for all projects, which was much more efficient.

As the shops became specialized, production increased, and more parts and materials were secured from sources off the Depot. Close coordination was needed between stock tracers in the General Supply Department and the Expediting Branch in order to have material availability information always on hand for each shop. Standard methods for obtaining (and maintaining) this information involved a "Kardex System" that gave perpetual figures on the number of reparable items received in the shops and those completed, both daily and cumulative. The Kardex indicated whether each item left the shop serviceable, reparable, or condemned.

During the 1950s and 60s, Hill Field supplied items to military installations world-wide. Supply administrators continuously sought improved methods of operation that would increase efficiency and decrease labor demands. Project "WISE" ("Worldwide Implementation of Supply Economy") was implemented in 1950, which encouraged individual bases all over the world to develop and test methods of increased mechanization in warehouses.

In 1951, roller skates were introduced to warehouses like Building 5 that contained lighter items of stock. On a 30-day service test basis, eight airmen wore clamp-on skates with steel wheels while collecting stock from the bins and shelves to fill orders. At the end of the trial period, storekeepers found that the airmen wearing skates filled shipping vouchers approximately three times faster than those who walked. The warehouse supervisor and other personnel generated considerable enthusiasm over this project. Difficulty was encountered, however, in the rapid deterioration of the clamp-on roller skates. The service was discontinued pending receipt of shoe-type, rubber-wheel skates.

Also in 1951, a new system to expedite the movement of freight from warehouses to packing and shipping points was initiated. Signs reading "yes" or "no" were placed outside the warehouses so truck drivers would know at a glance whether or not to stop or to proceed to the next point. Greater efficiency resulted, since trucks moved in a continuous circuit with no unnecessary stops.

General

Description: Building 5 is a large, two-story brick "U" shaped building. It consists of two long wings separated by two sets of railroad tracks. A two-story administrative section ties the two wings together at the northern end of the building. The two-story section has a flat roof, and the two wings are roofed in a gable/monitor configuration, that slopes slightly for drainage purposes. The brick walls are laid in a six-course American bond pattern with projected detailing around the administration entries.